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**THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NFAC 5564-81

3 September 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Miss Helene Boatner

FROM: Richard Lehman  
Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council

SUBJECT: Procedures for Production of Interagency Assessments

1. Although the work of our ad hoc committee on procedures has been completed, I have received a suggestion from one of our analysts that I would like your reactions to. We are in the course of formulating detailed internal procedures to implement the NFIB-approved document of 30 July, and I would like to incorporate something along these lines, if you find it acceptable.

"I do not expect to obtain strong support for this idea, but I am convinced it would substantially reduce the length of coordination meetings and, more important, would enhance the cogency, clarity, and consistency of the product. Although some of the comments offered by NFIB Representatives on a draft estimate raise questions that need to be aired and resolved in face-to-face discussion, most do not. Most of these comments are noncontroversial suggestions for improvement that could be provided in written form -- even as scribbles in the margin of the draft -- and accommodated by the principal drafter without having a dozen other people sitting around a table observing the process. Receiving the Reps' comments in writing would tend to provide for more thoughtful review of those comments -- review initially by the drafter working in the relative calm of his own office, rather than by a group of people who may have been sitting in a meeting long enough to become tired, hungry, ornery, and impatient.

In many instances, moreover, review means not just deciding whether to accept or reject an amendment; rather, it requires drafting new language, since the proposed revision may be unacceptable even though it reveals a weakness or ambiguity in the original draft. The individual drafter is better able than a group to do this without introducing new ambiguities, inconsistencies, or awkwardness. As products of existing procedures, estimates contain many sentences and paragraphs that were written by committee and that -- unfortunately -- sound like they were.

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Accordingly, I would replace the first tick under Section C, page 6, with the following three ticks:

- \* - NIE Chairman asks OCO to disseminate clean revised draft to NFIB Representatives, who usually will have ten days to provide written comments to the principal drafter.

- \* - Principal drafter revises draft, taking account of Representatives' comments.

- \* - When satisfied with the revisions, NIE Chairman asks OCO to disseminate a clean revised draft to NFIB Principals, who usually will have ten additional days to consult their Principals before coordination meeting is held.

Someone else may have better ideas about how much time to give the NFIB Representatives to respond. Although my suggestion adds an additional stage to the procedure, I do not think it would significantly lengthen the process for most NIE's. Indeed, it might shorten the production time for some NIE's, since it would reveal contentious issues -- and possible ways to resolving them -- before the coordination meeting, and would avoid many of the problems of style and consistency that often necessitate further clean-up work after a meeting.

Adoption of this suggested procedure would in no way infringe on the freedom of NFIB Representatives to raise any points they wish at coordination meetings, whether or not these points had been incorporated in the revised draft."

2. Please give me your comments by Wednesday, 16 September.

Richard Lehman

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